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By:   
Brendy Lynn Belony

**IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE**

Inventor :Masaaki OKA  
Filed :December 9, 2003  
For :METHOD AND APPARATUS...  
Serial Number :10/730,881

Commissioner for Patents  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

May 9, 2006

**INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT**

SIR:

In order to comply with discretionary regulations 37 CFR §§ 1.97 and 1.98, attached hereto is a copy of Form PTO-1449 and copies of the non-US documents (if any) listed thereon. These documents contain information which the Examiner may consider to be important in deciding whether to issue a patent in the instant application.

Attached is a copy of a Communication pursuant to Article 96(2) EPC dated March 9, 2006 from corresponding European Patent Application Number 03 028 249.5-2223. All of the references cited in this document were submitted in an IDS filed on August 11, 2005 and an IDS filed on August 11, 2004.

The present Information Disclosure Statement is being submitted in compliance with 37 § CFR 1.56 as an Examiner might consider any cited document important in deciding whether to allow the application to issue as a patent, but the citation of each document is not to be construed

as an admission that such document is necessarily relevant or prior art. No representation is intended that the cited documents represent the results of a complete search, and it is anticipated that the Examiner in the normal course of examination, will make an independent search and will determine the best prior art consistent with 37 CFR 1.104 (a), and in the course of such search will review for relevance every document cited on the attached form even if not initialed.


Each item of information contained in this information disclosure statement was first cited in a communication from a foreign patent office in a counterpart foreign application, not more than three months prior to the filing of the information disclosure statement.

As this statement is being filed prior to issuance of a first Office Action, no fee is due. However, any fee determined to be due with this statement may be charged to Deposit Account 50-1290.

Early and favorable consideration is respectfully solicited.

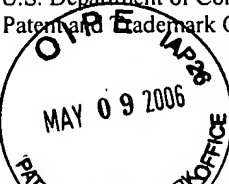
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Respectfully submitted,

  
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Brian E. Hennessey  
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Customer Number: 026304  
Docket No: SCEP 20.778

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1449/PTO	U.S. Department of Commerce Patent and Trademark Office	Application No. : 10/730,881
<b>INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT BY APPLICANT</b> <u>Sheet 1 of 1</u>		Filing Date :
		First Named Inventor: : M. OKA
		Group Art Unit :
		Examiner Name :
		Attorney Docket No. : SCEP 20.778

PATENT DOCUMENTS						
Examiner Initials	Cite No. <sup>1</sup>	U.S. Patent Document	Kind Code if known <sup>2</sup>	Name of Patentee or Applicant of Cited Document	Date of Publication of Cited Document MM-DD-YYYY	Pages, Columns Lines Where Relevant Passages or Relevant Figures Appear

FOREIGN DOCUMENTS						
Examiner Initials	Cite No. <sup>1</sup>	Foreign Patent Document Office <sup>3</sup> Number <sup>4</sup> Kind Code <sup>5</sup> (if known)	Country	Name of Patentee or Applicant of Cited Document	Date of Publication of Cited Document MM-DD-YY/Y	Pages, Columns Lines Where Relevant Passages or Relevant Figures Appear

### Other Prior Art-Non Patent Literature Documents

Examiner Initials	Cite No.	Include name of the author (in CAPITAL LETTERS), title of the article (when appropriate), title of the item (book, magazine, journal, serial, symposium, catalog, etc.), date, page(s), volume-issue number(s), publisher, country, where published, source.	Applicant check here if English language translation attached
		Communication pursuant to Article 96(2) EPC from corresponding European Patent Application Number 03 028 249.5-2223, dated March 9, 2006	
Examiner Signature	Date Considered		

Examiner: Initial if reference considered, whether or not citation is in conformance with MPEP 609. Draw a line through citation if not in conformance and not considered. Include copy of this form with next communication to applicant.  
<sup>1</sup>Unique citation designation number. <sup>2</sup>See attached Kinds of U.S. Patent Documents. <sup>3</sup>Enter Office that Issued the document, by the two-letter code (WIPO Standard ST.3). <sup>4</sup>For Japanese patent documents, the indication of the year of the reign of the Emperor must precede the serial number of the patent document. <sup>5</sup>Kind of document by the appropriate symbols as indicated on the document under WIPO Standard ST.1<sup>1</sup> if possible. <sup>6</sup>Applicant is to place a check mark here if English language Translation is attached. Burden Hour Statement: This form is estimated to take 2 hours to complete. Time will vary depending upon the needs of the individual case. Any comments on the amount of time you are required to complete this form should be sent to the Chief Information Officer, Patent and Trademark Office, Washington, DC 20231. Under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. DO NOT SEND FEES OR COMPLETED FORMS TO THIS ADDRESS. SEND TO: Assistant Commissioner for Patents, Washington, DC 20231.